

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the research problem, the objective of the study, the scope and limitation the significance of the study, the significance of the study, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of study

Writing is a vital productive skill in language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It allows learners to express ideas, experiences, and reflections in a clear and meaningful way. Among various writing genres taught in EFL classrooms, the recount text is especially important because it helps students retell past events in a structured and chronological order (Derewianka & Jones, 2018).

However, despite its relevance, many vocational high school students struggle with writing effective recount texts. They often face difficulties in generating ideas, organizing events chronologically, using correct grammar (especially past tense), and maintaining coherence throughout their writing (Yulia & Fatimah, 2023). Preliminary observations at SMKS Putra Harapan Kediri revealed that students' average scores in recount writing tasks were below the minimum passing grade. Moreover, teachers reported low student motivation, often attributed to traditional writing instruction that focuses more on rigid structure than meaningful expression. Seeing these challenges, there is a growing need for writing instruction that is more engaging and student-centered. One promising alternative is diary writing, a reflective activity in which students regularly record personal experiences and emotions in their own words. This method not only encourages daily writing habits

but also aligns naturally with the structure of recount texts. Through diary writing, students can freely explore their thoughts before transforming them into structured narratives under teacher guidance. In practice, teachers may ask students to write weekly diaries about recent activities or events, which are later revised into recount texts focusing on content, organization, and grammar.

The use of diary writing is grounded in strong theoretical foundations. Flavell (1979) highlights the role of metacognitive awareness, thinking about one's thinking, in enhancing learning. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of reflection and social interaction in cognitive development. Elbow (1998) also supports informal writing, such as diaries, as an essential step toward more formal academic writing. Together, these perspectives suggest that reflective, personal writing can improve students' ability to produce well-developed texts.

While existing studies have explored the general benefits of diary writing, few have specifically investigated its effect on students' recount text writing, particularly in Indonesian EFL settings. For instance, Hartono & Meylani (2021) examined student engagement through reflective journaling but did not assess improvements in genre-specific writing. Similarly, Nasution et al. (2020) focused on increased student motivation but did not evaluate textual outcomes. These studies indicate that although diary writing appears beneficial, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding its impact on recount text quality in terms of content, organization, and grammar.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by examining whether diary writing improves students' recount writing performance at SMKS Putra Harapan Kediri. Using a quantitative approach, this research compares the writing performance of

students taught with and without the diary writing method, focusing on three key aspects: content, organization, and grammar.

B. Research Question

Based on the background and identification of the problems, it is necessary to do a study in this field. The research question can be formulated as follows:

“Do the students who are taught by using a diary have better ability in writing recount texts in terms of content, organization, and grammar than those who are taught using picture series?”

C. Research Objective

Based on the formulation above, to determine whether students who are taught using a diary have better ability in writing recount texts, including content, organization, and grammar, compared to those who are taught using a picture series.

D. Scope and Limitations

This study is conducted at SMKS Putra Harapan Kediri, focusing on Grade X students. The research investigates the effect of diary writing on students' ability to write recount texts. It is limited to the aspects of content, organization, and grammar. Other elements such as vocabulary richness and mechanics (punctuation, spelling) are not included in the analysis. The results may not be generalizable beyond the studied population due to contextual constraints.

E. Significance of The Study

The result of the study is expected to be used theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretical Significance

- a. This study contributes to the development of writing instruction methods, particularly the integration of diary writing to enhance recount text writing.

- b. It also serves as a reference for future research that focuses on reflective and genre-based writing practices.

2. Theoretical Practically

- a. The result of this study suggests applying the diary writing method to increase students' writing ability in recount text.
- b. The use of the diary writing method in writing can make the students more interested, excited, and enjoy doing their tasks associated with the writing materials (recount text).

F. Definition of Key Terms

This section clarifies the essential terms used throughout this study, ensuring a shared understanding of their meaning within the research context.

- 1. Effectiveness: In this study, effectiveness refers to the measurable improvement in students' recount writing performance after being taught using diary writing, indicated by increased scores in content, organization, and grammar.
- 2. Diary writing: A personal and reflective writing activity where students express daily experiences, thoughts, or feelings. In this context, it is used as a tool to help students practice recount writing informally and meaningfully through structured classroom implementation.
- 3. Writing skills: The ability to communicate thoughts through written language. In this study, writing skills refer specifically to composing recount texts that are coherent, structured, and grammatically accurate.
- 4. Recount text: A text that retells past events in chronological order. It typically includes orientation, a sequence of events, and a reorientation or conclusion. Recount texts are used to assess students' narrative writing ability in this study.